



Testimony of AARP Volunteer, Bob Rodman on

S.B. 270

Public Health Committee

March 1, 2010

Good Morning, Chairman Harris, Chairwoman Ritter, ranking members DeBicella and Giegler, and members of the committee, my name is Bob Rodman. I am an AARP volunteer and a former pharmaceutical marketing representative. I spent 5 years as a Medical Representative for J.B. Roerig, a marketing division of Pfizer plus an additional 7 years in the field for Syntex Laboratories. My remaining 22 years with Syntex Laboratories was as a Trainer. Following retirement and to the present I have been part of the active management of a non-profit society dedicated to improving the training practices in the Pharmaceutical, Biotech, Medical Device and Diagnostic industries.

I am here today on behalf of AARP's more than 600,000 members in Connecticut to support S.B. 270, which is based on a recently enacted Massachusetts law. This law requires pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers to adopt codes of conducts for professional service representatives and restrict lavish gifts to health care providers. Restrictions on excessive marketing costs should reduce the price of prescription drugs, but more importantly, S.B. 270 creates transparency and accountability. AARP believes that relationships between Pharmaceutical, Biotech and Medical Device companies and prescribers should be transparent, free from any perceived or real conflicts of interest, and ultimately guided by the best interests of the patient. We believe all individuals should get the right drug, at the right time, for the right cost. And, we are committed to promoting evidence-based, unbiased prescribing and access to appropriate and affordable prescription drugs.

Everyone will benefit from a valuable and appropriate collaboration between providers and the industry continue. But, consumers have a right to know about those relationships and the state has a right to ensure that compensation is reasonable and not influenced by inappropriate arrangements. Today the Pharmaceutical, Biotech and Medical Device industries are losing credibility with the public. S.B. 270 stands as one small step to improve the stature that this industry deserves.

AARP believes S.B. 270 successfully achieves these objectives without unreasonably restricting the industry. The bill allows pharmaceutical, biotech and medical device manufacturing companies to adopt their own marketing code of compliance. This gives companies the flexibility to adopt a code of conduct that best fits their business model and company standards. Additionally, the legislation will not negatively impact local delis or restaurants because professional service representatives will still be allowed to provide meals to physicians and other covered recipients as long as those meals are "reasonable and occasional" and associated with the professional information that they trained and capable of delivering while in the doctor's office.

AARP has had numerous meetings offering our ideas and taking suggestions on how to make this bill the most effective it can be, without being overbroad. We have worked closely with the Attorney General, Connecticut Center for Patient Safety, American Medical Students Association, and consumer groups. We have also worked with the Chairs of this Committee and legislators from both sides of the aisle to seek input.

S.B. 270 provides a well-thought out approach that ensure accountability and transparency, and AARP urges members of the Committee to support the proposal.